

## **Revd Dr Catherine Shelley**

***Nominated by:*** The Ven Bill Braviner, Archdeacon of Halifax, Huddersfield Area

***Seconded by:*** The Revd Julie Clarkson, Vicar of Castleberg Benefice (Settle, Giggleswick and Rathmell), Bowland & Ewcross Deanery; Ripon Area Dean of Women's Ministry



I am currently the vicar of Todmorden, Walsden and Cornholme, in the Calder Valley and the Dean of Women's Ministry for the Huddersfield Episcopal Area.

I am loving being back in the North and have returned home to the Pennines to be closer to my mum, who has recently given up driving and is not getting any younger. I am single.

I am from Manchester originally, which is where I was ordained, being sent from Ordsall, a Salford estate, and in my 14 years of Ordained ministry have also served in:

- Birmingham, as Chaplain to Birmingham University,
- Held PTO in London and Southwark, whilst working for the church as a lawyer
- Southwark Diocese, as parish priest in an outer-London Council Estate and as Area Dean. I now minister in a town with both rural and estates ministry.

I have served on Diocesan Synods in Manchester, Birmingham and Southwark and am now a member of Leeds Diocesan Synod.

As well as being an Area Dean in Southwark, I was a member of the:

- Diocesan Safeguarding Panel and a safeguarding trainer
- Eco-Diocese working group and Environmental Adviser for Woolwich area and
- Diocesan Churchyards Adviser

Before ordination, besides working as a legal aid and child protection lawyer, I was a local authority councillor in Brighton with the Lead Portfolio for Young People, which means that I also have a good understanding of public life and the church's context.

This gives me diverse perspectives on the Church and its mission and ministry, as well as the legal skills and understanding to make a difference in General Synod.

In both my previous and current parishes I have worked for inclusion, seeking to enable members from diverse backgrounds to feel part of the mainstream of the church, whilst also enabling smaller support groups to develop confidence and safe space.

I am currently working with Rev Ruthi Gibbons in Hebden Bridge to develop ministry for and with the LGBTQI+ communities of the Calder Valley; this work is welcoming, and welcoming back, to faith people alienated by negative headlines about sexuality.

**I am committed to equality for everyone, in all roles and at all levels of the church, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, socio-economic status, mental health or sexuality and believe that inclusion is essential to the Church's mission as we speak to the diversity of communities across the Diocese and the country.** I want to focus on what we have in common, to build a broad church where God speaks through our different perspectives and "Christ plays in 10,000 places," to quote Eugene Peterson.

### **Missional Frontlines:**

I want to serve on General Synod to offer a voice for those on the frontlines of the church in our parishes, estates, chaplaincies and other areas of mission served by those in SSM ministry, in all of which I have some experience of both the joys and the pressures. I am passionately committed to keeping the Church present in all our communities, through common funds to support ministry in estates and poorer rural areas.

Though I am from a catholic background I have experience of working in parishes across the theological spectrum, as well as the breadth of theology required in chaplaincy work. I believe that theological breadth is a strength of the Church of England, making it genuinely catholic. The most exciting Deaneries in which I have worked have been those where theological diversity challenges us to focus on our common mission.

### **Environment:**

Climate change and poverty are the greatest challenges in our world, both locally and internationally. I believe that Synod's bold commitment to Net Zero by 2030 is a prophetic witness in our world and am keen to ensure that we do not lose or water down that commitment. Coming from Todmorden, home of Incredible Edibles, I know that working together on the environment can be a significant missional activity, which touches on our common humanity and transcends more sectarian church divides.

### **Safeguarding:**

The Church has not covered itself in glory on safeguarding. As someone who not only has significant professional experience in safeguarding, as a lawyer, trainer and in pastoral ministry, I am also a survivor (though not of church abuse) and believe I can therefore bring important insights to this aspect of the church's ministry.

### **Diversity and Inclusion:**

It goes without saying that I support the Prayers of Love and Faith and am committed to inclusion across the range of protected characteristics and other areas of inequality, like finance, employment and housing status. Throughout my ministry I have sought to live out my commitment to inclusion through supporting, enabling and confidence building amongst those who are disadvantaged by church and societal structures. I have developed and delivered training, for example in trusteeship, to enable a more diverse range of people to lead in the church with confidence.

### **Supporting statement from Rev Canon Angela Dick, Huddersfield Area BAME/GMH**

**Adviser:** I am pleased to warmly commend Catherine's decision to offer herself in serving on General Synod. Her dedication to the Gospel call to be a diverse and inclusive church in the communities we serve is very evident. She would bring a wealth of gifts, skills and experience with a background in law, safeguarding and advocating for women. Her involvement with the 'Together Network' shows her belief that inclusion should be across the board to ensure that *all* are welcome in the Kingdom of God.



The two General Synod vacancies which we are voting to fill were held by Clergy representatives who were female and inclusive. I hope that you will feel able to give me your first preference vote so that we have at least one female and inclusive voice amongst those elected to replace them.